

ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF IRELAND

249

ADDENDUM

From this Irish county series, as here discussed, all persons of Protestant religion have been omitted. The number thus excluded is 312 Presbyterians and 488 Church of Ireland, of these the vast majority come from the northern counties—Antrim, Armagh, Fermanagh, Down, Londonderry, Tyrone, Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan. Mr. Dupertuis directed this sorting because he was of the opinion that the Ulster Protestants really represent, in large part, a recent Scotch immigration, and the Church of Ireland English immigrations. In the final report on Ireland these northern Protestants will be included. They could hardly alter the distribution pictures perceptibly, except (possibly) in the counties mentioned.

LITERATURE CITED

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BROWNE—*Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishahark.* 321

portance when there are several persons to be examined, for, if kept waiting, they will most probably either slip off or refuse to be measured. 125

(A). *Hair and Eyes Colour.*—In the obtaining of these data the methods, cards, and tables were precisely the same as those used in the expedition to Aran, to the report of which the reader is referred for particulars.

(B). *Measurements.*—These were, with the exceptions hereafter mentioned, the same as previously. The head circumference and external binocular breadth, not having proved satisfactory, were omitted, and for them were substituted:—(1). The upper face length measured from the naso-frontal suture to the separation between the central incisors at the gum. (2). The height sitting. This, though it is certainly a most valuable measurement, for which reason it was inserted in the observation schedule, was found to be altogether unsuited for field work, as it could only be taken in a few exceptional cases, so I had reluctantly to abandon it. (3). Auriculo-mental radius, measured with the Dublin craniometer, from the centre of the ear-hole to the point of the chin.

(C). *Instruments used.*—These consisted of Garson's anthropometer, a sliding measure for the limbs, Broca's compas d'épaisseur and compas glissière and a Chesterman steel tape. Instead of the fixed metallic Cunningham craniometer, the new portable pattern of the same instrument (made specially for field work by Messrs. Robinson, of Grafton-street, Dublin) was taken, and stood the test well, being quite as rigid as the older pattern when set up, and, as it is made of boxwood, much lighter. Its portability is a great advantage, as by the removal of one screw-bolt the whole instrument may be disjointed and carried in the coat-pocket. A set of Snellen test-types for accurately estimating the keenness of eyesight was also taken, and proved to be very useful. 126

The whole, with note-books and observation forms, were carried, fitted in a canvas knapsack, and, as they weighed under ten pounds, were light enough to be easily carried even in long walks over very rough ground.

(D). *Remarks on the Methods employed.*—There were several difficulties experienced in the making of the observations this year, due partly to the visit being made at harvest time when most of the people were engaged in the fields, partly to local causes, the principal of which were the shyness of the people, the manner in which the hair of most of the women was covered by the shawl which was drawn more closely on the approach of a stranger, and the closeness with 124 ●
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[302] which the hair of many of the men was cut, which often rendered distinction of shade very difficult. Owing to the season most of the observations had to be made in the morning when the people were going to their work, or early in the evening when they were returning, or gathered around their cottage doors; in many cases, however, they were followed to the harvest field and measured there.

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[123] The taking of photographs did not, as elsewhere, cause the assembly of the knot of spectators which usually affords so good an opportunity for the collection of eye and hair colours; it had rather the opposite effect, as the people have a strong dislike to having their portraits taken.

In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 241 individuals, on 40 of whom (being about one-fifth of the adult males of the islands) measurements and other observations were taken.

Care was exercised that none of those measured should be entered in the ordinary nigrescence cards, as well as to avoid recording the same individual twice or the noting of persons who were not natives.

(x). *Photography.*—For the reasons already mentioned there could not be as much done in this department as had been hoped; but, in spite of the strong aversion shown by many of the people to having their portraits taken, and the strong winds prevailing during our stay, my brother, J. M. Browne, who accompanied me to do the necessary photography, succeeded in obtaining a considerable number of typical groups, as well as some single portraits in full face and profile, and a series of views illustrative of the modes of life and environment of the people.

2.—PHYSICAL CHARACTERS.

142 (A). The people, on the whole, much resemble the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Connemara, and their appearance testifies to a mixed origin. The following is believed to be a correct description of their average physical characters:—

[141] *Stature and bulk.*—The men, as a rule, are stoutly built, and of medium height; very few can fairly be termed tall, and there is a very considerable proportion of men of low stature. The average height is 1633 mm., or about 5 feet 6½ inches, which falls short of the Irish mean stature as found by Gould, the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association, and others, by about two inches.

142 The women are of a lighter build than the men, and, apparently,
143 more even in height; they also show more strikingly that great simi-

125 changes were made to bring our observation form into closer accord with that adopted by the Ethnographic Survey Committee of the British Association for use in England. The new form admits of very rapid noting, and in collecting easily and accurately the main physical characters of the persons examined. It has not, however, any advantage over the old form, of which it is a modification, in the convenience of working up results, in fact it is inferior in this respect as the spaces for indices at the bottom of the page, which are omitted, proved a great help in tabulating the results of the Inishbofin Survey; another defect is that some of the points to be noted are not strictly defined, and leave too much to the personal opinion of the observer.

(A.) *Hair and eye colour.*—No change was made in this part of the work, the method being exactly that used on the two previous occasions. For full particulars the reader is referred to the Report on the visit to the Aran Islands.¹

(B.) *Measurements and instruments.*—These were the same as formerly employed, with two additions:—(1) *The height of the head*; and (2) *height of cranium*, both projections, directions for taking which were printed on the observation forms. These measurements were given a trial, as they form part of the series on the English form, but after a time they were abandoned for reasons given below.

126 The same set of instruments as used in Inishbofin was carried, packed in a canvas case. It consisted of *compas d'épaisseur*, *compas glissière*, the portable pattern of Cunningham's craniometer, Garson's anthropometer, steel tape, Snellen test types, note books, nigrescence cards, and observation forms, as before. The only new appliance was a Trinity hand camera, made by Messrs. Curtis, Suffolk-street, Dublin, which, though subjected to rather rough treatment, stood the test admirably and did very satisfactory work. When not in use it was carried in a stout waterproof case slung over the shoulder.

● 124 (C.) *Remarks on methods employed.*—The work had to be carried on under rather different circumstances from those experienced before, as the weather prevailing during my visit to the district was not too well suited for field work, the rains being frequent and heavy, and the wind very strong, besides this, the population is much more scattered than any dealt with before, and long journeys had often to be made for very little result. In some ways, however, the work

¹ *Ethnography of the Aran Islands, Co. Galway, Proc. R.I.A., vol. 11., 3rd ser., p. 768.*

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895

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BROWNE—*Ethnography of the Mullet, Inishkea, & Portacloy.* 591

was easier, the measuring being, in many cases, done under shelter, 124 instead of on the hills, the roadside, or the sea-shore.

As is mentioned above the two new measurements had to be abandoned owing to practical difficulties. It is a matter of experience in work of this sort in Ireland that persons do not come to be measured, [123] they have to be sought out and induced to submit themselves to the process, often no easy matter; there are generally several to be measured in quick succession, but if kept waiting long they will one by one slip off and refuse to allow measurement; and as the adapting of the anthropometer for these projections takes some time, the instrument [126] having to be unhipped for each, and then fitted up again to measure the next comer, it became evident that these projections would have to be given up if anything like a sufficient number of persons was to be measured. Moreover, accuracy in taking projection measurements is by no means easily obtained, even under the most favourable circumstances in a laboratory, and the difficulty is increased so much in field work, where it is not at all easy to get the men to understand exactly what position they are wanted to assume, so as to make the results unreliable.

The noting of the colours of the hair and eyes also presented some difficulties, the chief being to distinguish between those who were natives and strangers from other districts, which was rendered greater by the absence of a distinctive dress (except in the case of the people of Inishkea). In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 494 individuals, on 62 (male adults) of whom the full series of measurements and observations was made. As on the two former surveys precautions were taken against recording the same person twice, as well as against the inclusion of the men measured in the ordinary nigrescence cards.

(D). *Photography.*—Owing to the rain and rough weather as much could not be done in this department as had been hoped, but in spite of the difficulties of cloudy skies and high winds a number of photographs were taken, including, 17 portraits, 14 of them individuals measured, 12 groups, taken in all parts of the district, 30 illustrations of the occupations, modes of transport, and habitations of the people, also several of the antiquities of the district, and a set of views showing surface of land and nature of coast line, &c. 126

Some of these photographs were taken by myself, others by my brother J. M. Browne. The addition of the hand camera to our appliances has proved to be a great advantage, enabling portraits of unwilling subjects to be taken, and adding to the value of the photo-

[p. 202(B)]

- [21] II IRELAND'S decline in population
 [167] has been made possible by the
 availability of work elsewhere for
 her people. This article deals with one
 of the poorest and most isolated dis-
 tricts of the country, an island off the
 [434] west coast which, for over 60 years, has
 received government help in various
 forms, as well as money from relations
 in America and in Britain. And the
 [794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably con-
 tented community not untypical of
 many in the west of Ireland, all of
 them Roman Catholic in religion and
 depending on the priest for the main
 leadership. Emigration continues, but
 those left behind and those who return
 to the island have a leisured way of

- [114] *The material for this paper was partly col-
 lected during a visit with the Geographical
 Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author
 visited about half the houses on the island of
 [124] Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 house-
 holds recorded the numbers of the household,
 information on those who had emigrated, the
 area of the farm, number of stock, methods of
 selling produce, and other sources of income,
 such as fishing or work on the roads. Within
 this range the answers were generally reliable,
 but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful
 and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
 almost invariably understated as there are
 [578] jealousies between households about the use of
 commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer
 [731] told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep
 or so" but the following morning he had 23
 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was
 impossible to resist the comment over the garden
 wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."
 [113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed
 in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956,
 pp. 123-133, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones
 Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date) 1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A FOLKLORE SURVEY OF COUNTY CLARE.

(WITH PLATE XI.¹).

131 COUNTY CLARE from the fourth century of our era was united
631 politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond,
though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon.
Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the
enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve
until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric
past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces
of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*,
776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle
787 (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317,
and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs
of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago,
foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.² *Plists*
or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devour-
ing seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early
date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human
beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names con-
sidered below will show to what an extent our present nomen-
121 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I
124 propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the ban-
shee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

¹ This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

² Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date) 1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Collectanea.

181

since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions." 121
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I. Place Names and Legends of Places.

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.¹ Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poul nabrukkee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.² 103
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Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition³; while a third great independent line, the Corca- 103
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¹ Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

² This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamaras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

³ An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

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829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agri-
241 cultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was
233 subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep
[437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curachs*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [427] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions represent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to • [124] come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

26 • THE LAND AND THE SEA

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenuously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

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In Inis Beag, it is called "reading the Gospel (or Bible) at," and can bring illness or death and ultimate damnation within a prescribed time; the folk reason that if a cleric can cure with prayer, he also can cause illness and death by its use.

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One other control technique of the clergy must be mentioned—that of influencing civil servants to implement their wishes. One case among many that I recorded, based partly on rumor, will serve as an example of its potency. A middle-aged, unmarried man who anticipated inheriting land discovered that his widowed mother, with the advice of the curate and unknown to himself until the last moment, had "signed it over" to his younger brother who wished to marry. In his rage, the betrayed man threatened the priest who came to pacify him, and the following day he was removed to a mental institution. The folk accuse the curate of "forcing" the doctor to commit their neighbor, on the pretext that on occasion he acted "strangely" and held himself aloof from many of his fellows. Six months later he was released from the hospital as normal—according to Irish law which states that a patient under observation cannot be institutionalized for more than that period if declared sane—and he emigrated to England. Whether or not the curate prevailed on the doctor can never be known, but the islanders believe that he did and can cite equally extreme cases involving other priests and functionaries. The curate in question soon afterward was committed to the "mad-house" himself, which was, according to the folk, a form of divine punishment.

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Anti-clerical sentiment is strong in Inis Beag, although it is seldom manifested in acts of overt resistance to the will of the curate. An outsider must be careful not to voice a like sentiment, or, for that matter, evince agreement with diatribes directed against the clergy by islanders with whom he is conversing, or he will evoke a spirited defense of the church and be accused of anti-clericalism—or worse. The response of the folk reveals the deeply rooted ambivalence that they feel toward the church: how they revere its doctrines yet resent many actions of its representatives. An outspoken elder told me of his views concerning the church, which are shared by most of his less "bold" comrades: "The trouble with Ireland is the priests. They took over after the famine, when the population had halved and their number had quadrupled, and broke our spirit by preaching damnation and the sinfulness of sex. We came to depend on them instead of ourselves, and today they live off us but are strangers in our midst. They should be concerned only with the salvation of our immortal souls. Birds know more about God and his wishes for man than they do. The reason that we flee the country is to escape their control and the dull life they have created."

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Criticisms of past and present curates are so numerous that only the most repeated ones, which arouse the most resentment and anger when aired, can be taken up. There is a constant plea for older priests to be assigned to Inis Beag—men who have experienced life elsewhere in Ireland and abroad and know its countless facets, and who have "developed compassion for the human condition—rather than the "young, pink-cheeked Maynooth Seminary graduates" who often are assigned. As well as being youthful and naive, the folk feel that too many priests have acted aloof and supercilious, have been unhappy with their Inis Beag post, and have marked time waiting for their tenure to end. Their lack of commitment has meant, it is believed, frequent shirking of their duties toward

64 • THE VILLAGE AND THE FAMILY

with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his customers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

84 • THE VILLAGE AND THE FAMILY

Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20-21).

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible.

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.).

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor-

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tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness of attitude much resented by their less prestigious fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

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When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigious among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigious kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, dancing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

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Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions, because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride themselves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

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Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,

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108 • THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE ESTHETIC

boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

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be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

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Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

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Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

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As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

110 • THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE ESTHETIC

feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 833 [841] [846] [793]

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately. Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "coddling" my listeners. 83 [836] [783] 833 [124]

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bathing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this behavior outside when unobserved. 831 291 614 [758] [164] [824]

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puritanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty 15 182 181 152 [562]

- 273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[661] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness
and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness
which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes
them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse
with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country
125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they
wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart.
Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects
of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

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178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those
found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are
folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the
crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls,
and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose
narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral litera-
ture. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.
114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the
124 lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the
time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional
storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two
types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the
mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and
the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies,
social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short
realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

114 • THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE ESTHETIC

male but sometimes female. Also, the former occupied a higher prestige position than the latter, but there was not the clear-cut distinction between genres appropriate to each type of narrator as elsewhere in Ireland; the *seanchaí* sometimes related the exploits of Finn and the *scéalaí* the pranks of the red man. The two surviving storytellers in 1960 were both old men, but the *seanchaí* died in 1963 and the *scéalaí* two years later. Both had been prolific contributors to Irish Folklore Commission collectors and Continental folklorists. [562] [554] [814]

All of the above kinds of folklore expression, with the exception of folktales, were regarded as true by island folk in the past. The myths either coexisted or were reinterpreted with Biblical stories, and the legends were synchronized with events of ancient world history dating from just before the Flood to the eighth century. The Inis Beag *scéalaí* sometimes was derided by school children for still believing his narratives to be true, as was the *seanchaí* for claiming that the supernatural happenings described in his tales actually were experienced by islanders in the past century. Both narrators for many years had been visited only by folklorists and tourists wishing to hear them relate their repertoires of stories, for the only form of storytelling which has been perpetuated is the occasional gathering of men in a home or pub to exchange anecdotes, mostly related to fishing. I was told that in his prime the *scéalaí* could have recited narratives nightly for "at least a month" without ever repeating a story, had he ever been called on to do so. That the memory of the esteemed narrator is prodigious is revealed in the complete collection of all the material recorded from a single *scéalaí* of Co. Kerry, reported by Delargy, which included 396 pages of text: 186 tales, a few songs and song fragments, and various smaller items of prose and verse. These had been obtained from 27 different sources by the narrator, all of whom save one were neighbors (Delargy 1945:11). [814] [114]

Most liked by the folk were the prose narratives related by the *scéalaí* and tales of recent and contemporary historical events in the region, stories of the supernatural in Inis Beag, and personal experiences told by the *seanchaí*. Few of the stories dealt with historical occurrences in Ireland between the coming of Christianity and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and none of them concerned personages or happenings associated with the church. At my request, the *seanchaí* read three books of Irish folklore that I had brought with me—J. J. Campbell's *Legends of Ireland*, Jeremiah Curtin's *Irish Folk-Tales*, and Eileen O'Faolain's *Irish Sagas and Folk-Tales*—and declared that he had heard all of the stories therein as a youth from his father and other island storytellers. However, the versions in the books often were "incorrect," he claimed, and he delighted in "correcting" them; of course, there are many variants of each tale (as many as 527—Aarne-Thompson type 300 in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission), and he regarded the Inis Beag stories as the legitimate variants. Most of the local and Irish tales share types (plots) and motifs (incidents, characters, and objects) with those of European and other societies brought about by millennia of diffusion, but the Irish have refashioned these elements in their own corpus according to their culture and personality dispositions. 538 539 124 • 538 539

I will not discuss the various prose narratives told by the *scéalaí* of Inis Beag; the greater number of them can be obtained from Campbell or O'Faolain or Sean O'Sullivan's recent Folktales of Ireland. 538 114

130 • THE FUTURE OF THE ISLAND

set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus complex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread disaffection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle elsewhere, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones